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TRAVEL ISSUE

The Commonweal

March 10, 1950

The City of Rome

Sean O'Faolain

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Traveling by Bus

Dorothy Day

VOLUME LI 15c NUMBER 22

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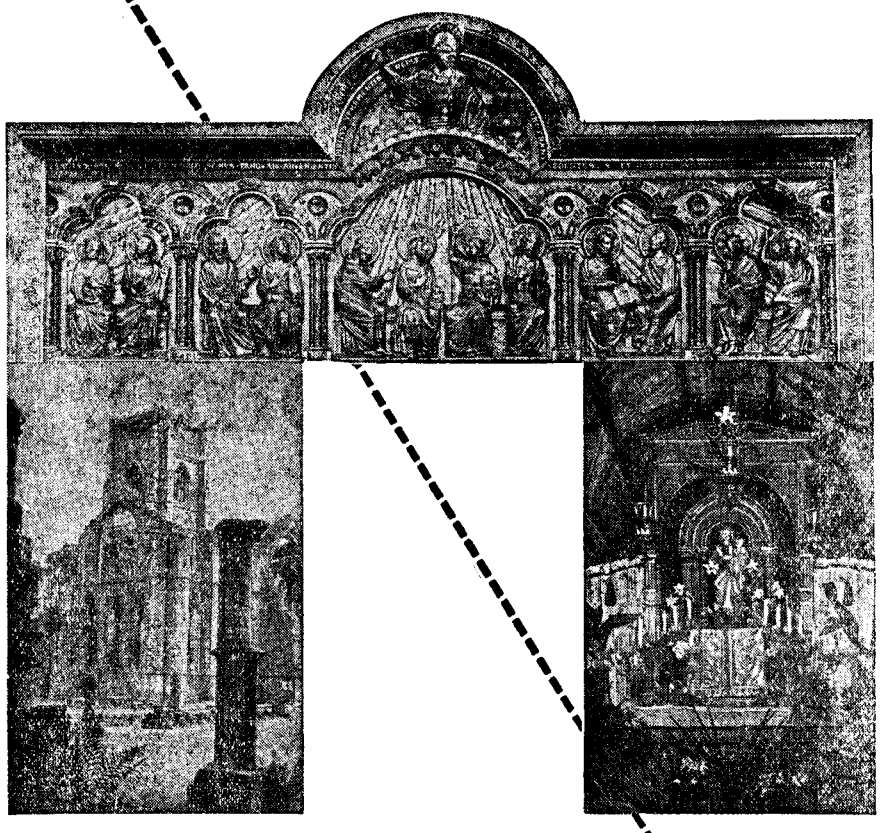

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—Brother H. Claude, F.S.C., reviewing *The Commonweal Reader* in the *Journal of Arts and Letters*, Winter 1950.

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The Commonweal

WEEK BY WEEK

De Profundis

IN THE Museum of Modern Art in Paris there is a room given over to the pencil sketches a French artist made in a Nazi concentration camp. You can stand before these drawings and study them as if they were some kind of fabled documents from hell. But if you look at them long enough, they begin to take on the flesh and blood of human meaning. Suddenly you realize that these sketches are of men and women like yourself, your contemporaries; men and women who played childish games during the same years you were a child, who went off to classrooms on days when you, too, were marching through school buildings while a harassed teacher played "Country Gardens" or "The Notre Dame Victory March." These starved, dehumanized-looking creatures you are faced with, once sang the popular hits you sang, saw the same movies, read the same headlines. Slowly, dimly then, while you stand there, you begin to realize what the Socialist Eugene Debs meant when he said, "While there is a man in prison, I am in prison. . . ."

It is true that each man has to learn the lesson of modern history for himself and in his own way. But for some, to have seen the little pictures in Paris is almost enough. A saint, a mystic, once said: "All the way to heaven is heaven," and here in these sketches is dramatic proof of the terrible reverse: All the way to hell is hell.

If you stay too long and too thoughtfully before these ghastly drawings, the closest things to candid-camera shots of totalitarianism we have, then you find it necessary to leave the building and savor immediately the taste of the freedom there is on the open streets. It is not the time for the indoors. The Rouaults, the Matisses, the Picassos have to be put off for another visit.

On the street outside the museum, you begin to wonder if the thin, undistinguished man who passes you wears the tattoo mark of Auschwitz or Sachsenhausen. When the liberation came and the Allied soldiers arrived, they found the stench of death everywhere, the bodies piled high; but there were still thousands left to be freed. Now, five years later, they are everywhere throughout Europe, and even throughout the world—plain ordinary men with wives and children and jobs, who ride the Paris Metro and the 5th Avenue bus like everybody else. There is no way of knowing by looking at them that they have earned their right to speak for humanity, that modern history, which fell on them with all its terror, has given them, above all living men, a right to be heard. The tattoo brands of the Nazis were small and are usually hidden under clothing.

During the past year, under the leadership of David Rousset, a French journalist, alumnus of Buchenwald and Neuengamme, and men like Father Michel Riquet, famous Jesuit victim of the Nazis, these men and women who should be heard have found a voice. They are calling for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry, consisting of former inmates of Nazi concentration camps, which would demand the right to make on-the-spot investigations of Soviet "correctional labor camps," said to be spread "across Siberia to the White Sea and the Baltic, from the very outskirts of Leningrad and Moscow to Baku."

Demands for investigations in the Soviet are nothing new, of course. This one, like the others, may come to nothing. But there is a big difference in this effort, in its universal, human appeal, in the well-earned authority of those making the demand. Coming from them, the question is one even the Soviets cannot ignore. No answer will itself be an answer: the desperate, damning silence of the guilty.

House FEPC Bill

ALMOST ten years ago a wartime Fair Employment Practices Commission was set up on a voluntary basis. Five years ago permanent legislation to assure all American workers the right to a job regardless of their race, nationality or creed, was first proposed in Congress. For the last two years a permanent FEPC has been a major item on the legislative program of the Truman administration. And now at long last the

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• THIS WEEK •

Week by Week 571

The City of Rome
by Sean O'Faolain 575

Traveling by Bus
by Dorothy Day 577

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 580

Books 584

Travel Books 586

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• NEXT WEEK •

"Popular piety and devotion are good things as long as they have a rising and elevating tendency in their quality. Watered-down and emptied-out mysticism, originally genuine emotion and true sentiment, becomes cheap emotionalism. Liturgy deteriorated into ritualism and performance may parade as popular while it is really a debased version of greater things."

So writes H. A. REINHOLD in the course of his article, "Lent in Focus."

House has adopted the McConnell Bill and passed it on to the Senate.

For those who believe that at this stage of history no man in our democratic United States should be deprived of a livelihood because of his race or creed, the measure leaves much to be desired. The Commission it would set up has no enforcing powers. There would be the authority to investigate and to order guilty companies to desist from discriminatory hiring practices, but there would be no compulsive sanctions with which to back up such an order. Corporations which ignored representations from the Commission could continue to discriminate, just as certain firms maintained a discriminatory policy throughout the war. Nor would the Commission have even the backing of public opinion in the South.

The nationwide problem of the American Negro, who constitutes the principal minority group for whom such legislation is designed, breaks down into several parts. Because of restrictive real estate covenants, separate and inferior educational and transportation facilities, the poll tax and inadequate protection against lynching, Negroes normally find themselves with the status of second-class citizenship. A law forbidding job discrimination is only one of the necessary remedies.

Yet it is a step that has to be taken before advances in other sectors are possible. A man whose opportunity to earn his livelihood is guaranteed by law to be as good as his neighbor's, will eventually achieve a status similar to his neighbor's. The gradual progress which the American Negro is now making, North and South, needs the solid foundation and the stimulus which a compulsive FEPC guarantee would give.

Eight states have adopted such a program since 1945: Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Oregon, Rhode Island and Washington. A recent poll by *Business Week* of employers in those Northern States reveals that "FEPC laws haven't caused nearly the fuss that opponents predicted. Disgruntled jobseekers haven't swamped commissions with complaints. Personal friction hasn't been at all serious. . . . . The unanimous view is that minority groups are finding openings in places barred to them before." Undoubtedly there would be dogged resistance in the Southern states to such compulsion. Yet even there the protection and moral weight of the law would tend to further that gradual solution of the racial problem upon which so many conscientious and progressive Southerners pin their hopes.

Despite all this, the McConnell Bill should be firmly supported. It is the first FEPC measure to pass one of the houses of Congress. It has wide

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possibilities from an educational point of view. It is an explicit legal recognition of a basic human right. It can even furnish a wealth of practical data for drawing up, later, more permanent and compulsive legislation.

By supporting the McConnell Bill in the Senate —filibuster or no filibuster—FEPC proponents need not renounce their ambition to win a more adequate measure. A new, peacetime FEPC with only investigative and reportorial powers can be but a starting point. Its existence should actually spur on those who seek racial justice in the United States.

Go Climb a More Meaningful Tree

ONCE upon a time *The New Yorker* was referred to in this magazine as "one of our inexpensive weeklies." That weekly has now observed its twenty-fifth anniversary with triumphant diffidence. It has been congratulated by many publications and people, the New York *Herald Tribune* saying, "Few publications have produced a sum of stimulation, contributed so greatly to enlightenment by sprightly criticism and lively concept of reporting, generally raised human gayety and taste, and increased the American concept of individual dignity."

The New Yorker has said that its intention is to make money and to make sense. It has made money and it has often made sense. It has, in fact, become so serious in execution and influential in accomplishment that the newspaper can go on to say, with a reasonably straight editorial face, "here is the sturdy flower of truth, wit and grace."

It is ungracious to be critical on birthdays, but *The New Yorker's* position as champion of individual dignity makes us rather uncomfortable. The work of E. B. White dominates the comment made in "The Talk of the Town." His short story in the anniversary issue is characteristic, and for that, revealing. It is a fantasy-satire on the destruction of the world. There are many things Mr. White includes in his rather sweeping satire of our society, things which can be facilely satirized: Pearl Harbor investigations, radio commercials, military men, spy hunts, New York *Times* editorials, *Life's* concern with sex and religion, best-sellers, etc.; but the essential attack is against cheapening human life and human relationships in an artificial, regimented and commercialized environment; against "further debasement of taste and intellectual life in general." This is a pretty strong position.

The positive thought whence these opinions spring is not so firm. The magazine's belief in "the American concept of individual dignity" often expresses itself in Mr. White's sermons from stones: perceptive and restrained remarks on nature and man (in the anniversary issue, rain and a tugboat captain). These essays are wonderfully written, right and truthful in what they say, but they say little. They are content with sentiment, and in this atomic age which so disturbs Mr. White, sentiment is ineffectual. One can lament the fact that there is no world government to prevent war, but it is stupid to act as though it were only perversity on the part of the rest of us that blocks it. *The New Yorker* says that man can never be wholly mechanized, human spirit will survive. But man can destroy his values and his own sanity; that is what Mr. White fears and decries. *"Will the words never quit going round and round? Is there no end to this noisy carrousel of indigestible ideas? Will no one ever catch the brass ring?"* This is a terrible cry. Where is the brass ring? There is none, if life is no more than tenderness and belief in the goodness of cool rain. The good life as it is seen on West 43rd Street is, sadly, impotent against barbarism. The dignity of the person requires that we commit ourselves to more than quiet in terminals and the shattering beauty of the cold morning.

More Taxes for Co-ops?

IN A BRIEF day in court, representatives of the National Tax Equality Association and other business organizations told the House Ways and Means Committee that consumers' and agricultural cooperatives should pay income taxes similar to those of private enterprise. They complained of the competition between co-ops and small business and spoke of a billion a year in additional tax revenue which might be had.

This is a continuing controversy. The record in other countries, where co-ops are more widespread, indicates that small business in general benefits from the growth of cooperatives, whatever certain individual businesses may suffer. And if tax exemptions were removed, the annual revenue accruing to the U. S. Treasury would be nearer thirty millions than a billion.

But what income taxes do these cooperatives actually pay already? Less than half of our agricultural cooperatives are exempt from income tax. To have exempt status, 85 percent of their trade must be with actual farmers, and refunds on purchases (patronage dividends) must be paid *pro rata* to all customers, whether members of the cooperative or not. The object is to help farmers secure necessary goods and services at a saving.

The majority of farm cooperatives and all city consumers' cooperatives do pay a federal income tax on all profits on sales to non-members. Pa-

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tronage dividends to members in proportion to their purchases are simply refunds. If they were ever held to be taxable, the co-ops could abandon their policy of charging the market price and passing on savings by means of refunds. They would then provide even sharper competition by cutting their prices outright on the basis of anticipated savings.

But the real argument for continuing the present tax status of consumers' cooperatives is that they operate for mutual service rather than private profit. It is particularly important now that American cooperatives should prosper and expand, for they give living proof that citizens and localities can organize and band together in order to build up necessary reserves of credit, maintain standards of quality, keep retail prices in hand and many other things for which Americans tend otherwise to look only to Washington.

Britain, a House Divided

THE results of the British election, which appear to have pleased no one at all, only prove again that you can't have it both ways. Yet such is the state of things in Britain that having it both ways is, in fact, what most of the voters would have liked. They knew, most of them, that Labor's slogans, "full employment" and "fair shares for all," were not empty ones, but at the same time they could not see the sense in further nationalization of industries and centralization of social services without even a pause for consolidating Labor's present position. Labor, it seemed, was flaunting the British tradition of personal independence without showing sufficient cause and that, of course, played into Tory hands. So the electorate was in a fix indeed.

One thing this election did establish is that there is a very real swing away from socialism in the free world. Socialists have lost ground already in Scandinavia, Western Germany, Belgium, Austria, New Zealand and Australia, while in France and Italy they are at the moment in retreat, on the outside of coalition governments. But it would be rash, on this evidence, to write off socialism or to write off the welfare benefits and the program of equality it stands for. It would be safer to say that socialism has foundered on the rocks of centralization and that it will work itself loose only when it develops a program calling for decentralization, a program less doctrinaire and more in keeping with the Western ideal of personal independence.

Meanwhile the democratic world can ill afford a shaky government in London just at this time. The United States and Continental Europe look to Britain to take the lead in European political federation and economic integration, both of which have been held up pending this election. With Marshall aid tapering off in 1952, the future economic health of Europe depends largely on such matters as reducing trade barriers and expediting a currency clearing house system. Britain's Labor government, because of what it considers its commitments to the sterling bloc and the Commonwealth, has been reluctant to tie in so closely with European Union. The Conservatives, who are more committed to this Union than Labor is, may now force Labor to take action and in doing so, they will probably open up a foreign policy debate; but it is generally felt that British politics for the time being will be introspective, for home consumption, with both Labor and the Tories jockeying for position, doing all they can to make domestic issues and to win votes for the impending showdown election.

Since it would be pointless to hold an election right away, it is expected that both parties will carry on the government and British foreign policy as cooperatively as possible until later in the year, when, after some political crisis or other, the parties can go to the electorate again for a mandate.

So what we are likely to have in Britain, during this interim period, is a cautious government, not a vigorous one able to take bold leadership in Europe or in Asia, where the Western powers must organize some resistance to Russian imperialism. Fighting for its right to live, the Western community of nations is caught with one of its most vital centers of leadership temporarily in a hesitant state of mind.

More than ever before, the responsibilities of leadership will fall now on the United States. Mr. Acheson, however, has made it our policy not to take bold leadership, not to appear to force any nation to do anything. We want Britain to take the initiative in Europe, with our help, and we want the native peoples to take the initiative in Asia. This is a commendable attitude and a worthy contrast to Soviet methods. But will it be enough now to save the day? One would think not, unless Mr. Acheson and Mr. Hoffman can augment it and so concentrate their salesmanship on the British that both parties in that country will see the wisdom, in terms of popular appeal, of taking vigorous action to save themselves and Europe.

There was a time when the British people, virtually alone, upheld the defense of Western democracy, a time that in Mr. Churchill's famous phrase was "their finest hour." Now there may be no bombs or blitzes to arouse us in the United States to what must be done, but the task we assume is the same one. And somewhat ironically, it is through the results of a democratic election in Britain that this "job of work" is passed on to us.

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The City of Rome

Everywhere is a grain of history, and every grain a mustard-tree

Sean O'Faolain

THE night-train to Rome becomes a day-train early in the morning, and by that hour everybody is physically and mentally in shirt-sleeves because of the gathering heat. An Italian *wagon-lit* in summer is as hot and friendly as an Italian tenement. When in a *wagon-lit* to Rome *magis tibi cor Romanus pandit.* All you have to do is to stand in the corridor and pick up life-stories for the listening. There is no metropolitan chilliness about Romans. Rome is the hometown, the village, the ancient mother: and Italians, like Americans, have a tremendous mother-cult. The only obstacle to heart-to-heart talks that morning was the wearying heat, and my head. Even to look out at the exhausted land whose yellow drouth must be what the desert looks like in high summer, seared the eyeballs. The river-beds were dry as old bones. The barren land was fissured like a volcanic lake that has ebbed bare. The olives were pale as exhausted ladies.

When, at last, the Tiber came it was a tawny trickle and the Campagna was a crackle of sere reeds and arid grass. There is no "Ecco Roma!" on this route, no distant, heart-lifting outline, no rising excitement and gradual satisfaction, and when you are at last spilled out into the raucous street you might, if it were not for the great Baths of Diocletian mounting before you in the square, be in London or Birmingham. What is more, you hardly care. You do not cry out "Ave Roma Immortalis!" You cry out loudly for a taxi, a bath and breakfast. Rome, you say, can wait; and so it can. It has, after all, been waiting a long time already; longer far than Paris, Byzantium or Baghdad; none longer except the fabulous cities of the East, Benares or Pekin; and none at all in which one may at a single glance look down so long and varied a perspective of human endeavor.

One afternoon, when I had been about two weeks in Rome, I found myself reading *The Marble Faun* in the farther corner of the Pincio garden—the reading of books about Rome in Rome is a pleasant sentimental occupation—looking from time to time over the edge of the Viale del Muro Torto northward along the valley of the Tiber into a shimmering haze of heat. Hawthorne, I found, had once stood here and looked also at Mount Soratte, some twenty miles away. Afterwards he had written this penetrating remark: "In the blue distance rose Soratte, and other heights, which have gleamed afar, to our imagination, but look scarcely real to our bodily eyes, because being dreamed about so much, they have taken the aerial tints which belong only to a dream." The sentence reminds us that Hawthorne deliberately chose Italy for the setting of his story as affording a sort of poetic or fairy precinct where actualities would not be so terribly insisted upon as they are, and must needs be, in America. His novel is a dread warning against letting Rome overwhelm the imagination. It had already overwhelmed mine. Not until I read that sentence of Hawthorne's did I understand the process. I put my finger into the book to ponder on it.

★

WE COME to Rome less to see a real city than to verify an ideal one. We have all been here before, many times since childhood. Mount Soratte? We look at it and we are straightway back at school and our old headmaster is chanting, *Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte* . . . pausing to comment: "Ah, you see, that is a mountain outside Rome and Horace is telling his friend to look out of the window and to notice that the snow is still shining on the tip of it." When we look at Soratte we verify not only one blue hill, but all the blue hills of youth. The verification is inevitably troubling as well as delightful.

I forget the name of the villa in the Pincio, now turned restaurant, on whose terrace one can sit and have tea or a *spremuta,* or ices (at Pincio prices) and survey Rome like a king. That afternoon I sat there and, still without finishing Hawthorne's passage, began to consider whether Rome has not a highly deleterious effect on whatever little sense of reality Italy will have left to the traveler by the time he has arrived here; as well as on whatever small conceit he may have had of himself as a cultivated man. "Over-

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SEAN O'FAOLAIN *is the author of "The Irish: A Character Study," "The Man Who Invented Sin," and "A Nest of Simple Folk." This article will be part of "A Summer in Italy" which will be published early next month by Devin-Adair.*

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whelms," is, I think, the word for this city. Of the three great thoughts that have passed through it, the Greek, the Latin and the Christian, the vicissitudes of any one would have alone sufficed to evoke Shelley's pregnant summary:

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city and the wilderness.

But when all three civilizations have mingled and persisted, with countless mutations and resurrections, and when every generation has recorded the prolonged battle visibly and magnificently, and when these metamorphoses lie under and over one another, what we look at is less a city than the long and complex story of mankind; one so miserable when we think of all the suffering it has brought to men and women like ourselves, and so chastening when we consider the price of its greatness that it may well subdue us with thoughts of eternity rather than of time, and become under our eyes less a monument than a tomb.

Rome lies spread beneath me in the setting sun. The Angelus is ringing in many tones, deep and piping, from the sea of roofs, domes, cupolas, campaniles and ruins below these still-flowering oleanders, cypresses and evergreen oaks. The city, dusted by its own evening depths and oncoming shadows, is gradually growing more transparent and less likely. The silhouette of Saint Peter's is soft as a bubble to the west, and three lesser domes decline in perspective to the south-west, one behind the other like images in receding mirrors. As the hour fades the solid mass appears to sink into the earth. Indeed, it might, at this hour, seem not so much to have risen from this mortal earth, century after century, as to have ascended from another world beneath it, and I begin gradually to think of her as another Persephone who has come to us again and again from the arms of Pluto, blossomed with splendor and beauty and vice, these fading monuments her granaries, these motes in the sunset a living dust from her flail, until as roofs and domes become at last a mere veil of light, and Hesper gleams in the flawless sky above the Campagna, I could imagine that Rome would at any moment fold into herself and vanish as a star.

★

ROME is too rich. Everywhere is a grain of history, and every grain a mustard-tree, and every name a lifetime's study. This Pincian hill, alone, never a memorable part of the oldest Rome, halts one at every step. I look about me and consider the happy confusion of this one spot alone. Just behind me, and behind the convent of Santa Trinità, by the corner of the Aurelian wall, stood the villa and gardens of Lucullus, patron-saint of gluttons who, like so many Italian generals of our time, became wealthy in war and obese in peace.

At this hour the French nuns of Sacré Coeur are singing Benediction hymns where those sanguine ghosts for ever shiver at the fatal dusk, above those convent steps where I am promised to climb some afternoon next week with messages from their sisters in Dublin and Chambéry. But why should they worry about ghosts? There are too many for them to segregate, or to discriminate. Under the terraced road lies one of Rome's eighty Christian catacombs; their church was built by Charles VIII, plundered during the revolution and restored by Louis XVIII; the obelisk before the church door came from the gardens of Sallust; Nicholas Poussin lived next door; across the street, Claude Lorraine; a few doors farther down, Rossini; from their back windows they look at the Villa Malta, where Cagliostro flourished; many a time Keats must have climbed these "Spanish steps" in front of this church, with heavy heart and panting breath, before at last he heard this world's last faintest murmur in that room in the corner house on the left which no lover of youth or poetry can visit unmoved. . . . So, I could go on for pages, peeling off stratum after stratum of passionate life without ever once leaving this balustrade, or letting eye or mind wander more than a hundred yards away. It is the same in every corner of Rome. It is all depth and no surface, like a great bay at night, when each dim light is a downward finger.

The full story of the life of any one such corner of Rome would need to be printed in columns, like geological zones, century under century. But even that image is inadequate for a city whose age has so often been exhumed to enrich its youth. There is no image in nature for the growth of Rome, a mingled process of intertexture like weaving, reversal like the tides, of inversion like ploughed soil; a fugue of music; a cycle of death and resurrection. No wonder the favorite motifs of its tombs are the peacock whose flesh was thought incorruptible, deathless Proserpina among the flowers, Christ as a nimbate and radiant charioteer, the Sol Salutis, the tireless sun. We need never hope or wish to hold by any faculty less agile than the imagination a city at once so perishable and so permanent. That Lucullan garden and house is an image of it all. Where are the marbles and mosaics now that Lucullus and Messalina trod? Some are away across Italy in Ravenna, rifled by a Visigoth. Some of the mosaic floors are underneath the floors of a near-by house in the Via Sistina. Everywhere in Rome something has gone somewhere else, become something else. The thought is bewildering, delightful and unsettling. It induces a certain sense of insecurity amounting at times to a sense of irreality as if the ground beneath one's feet were a shifting sand.

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Traveling by Bus

You can see the country, meet the people . . . and get where you're going at half the price

Dorothy Day

WHERE do you get all the money to travel around with?" is one of the embarrassing questions asked us when we appear on lecture platforms, and it is asked also in letters from some of the readers of the *Catholic Worker* who disagree with the positions we take. They want to let us know they are judging us severely for spending money which should go to the poor, on jaunting over the highways.

If we write on poverty, and we shall continue to do so, and have others write such articles for the *Catholic Worker* from month to month, it is necessary to meet such questions.

It shows how seriously our readers and listeners take this call to poverty, holy poverty, voluntary poverty, which is the foundation, the starting point of all our work for man's freedom, his dignity and for his love.

Let us say that travel by bus is traveling in poverty but not in destitution. It costs about half as much as by railroad. And as people say who are doing it for the first time, and think they have lowered their standards a little, "you see so much of the country."

I have just returned from a trip to the West Coast, half of which was made by bus. Now that the war is over, you do not have to make reservations ahead but can go to the stations half an hour early and get your tickets. The Greyhound of course is the best. The Trailways bus is so built that there is no room for the knees. I have spent a night of misery between New York and Washington, wedged in at the side of a stout woman and with the seat ahead pressing close against me.

Between our farm at Newburgh and New York there are two bus lines operating, the Short Line and the Mohawk. The latter has the more comfortable buses, with reclining seats. But it follows the thrilling, somewhat terrifying road which winds around Bear Mountain and Storm King Mountain. The road is clearly labeled "Dangerous but Passable" and is posted with signs, "Falling Rocks," which cause you to peer up at the jagged cliffs hanging overhead, while you shudder away from the abyss on the other side. The Short Line follows the less picturesque truck route.

There are no dangers between here and the Rockies on the cross-country trip, if you leave out of account fog, sleet and the snow storms at this time of the year. In winter the buses are more crowded because no one can use his car. Between all the little villages along the route people crowd into the buses, smelling of fresh air and snow and talking of conditions back off the highway, of the trucks that are stalled ahead and behind. Just when the radio is warning drivers to keep off the roads I feel safest, because then the cars crawl along and there are fewer of them. I really feel secure in the heavy vehicle that I could never conceivably drive myself, so I don't even have the back-seat driver tendencies that I have in other cars.

We had a good driver leaving New York, cheerful and informative. As we went through the Holland tunnel he told his passengers all about the explosion which took place in the tunnel some months before. We held our breath, praying, until we got through. Going over the Pulaski Skyway, he said, "This is seven miles long, it took seven years to build, and it cost seven men their lives."

I had heard the same comment about the Golden Gate Bridge. How many lives were lost on these roads, these bridges and tunnels which common men built and dug! You cannot travel by bus without having these ideas impressed upon you, up through the all but impenetrable canyons where power lines have been carried, pipe has been laid, roads have been built, if not stone by stone as in Roman times then actually foot by foot of slow and daily progress from one end of this vast country to the other. It makes you more patient with the slow work you are doing, the small job, the making of meals, the giving out of clothes, the building of that bridge of love from man to man, the creation of a sense of community, fellowship.

This first bus driver stayed with us to Bing-

DOROTHY DAY *is the editor of "The Catholic Worker." She is the author of "From Union Square to Rome," the story of her conversion, and two accounts of the Catholic Worker movement, "House of Hospitality" and "On Pilgrimage."*

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hamton, I believe, and he was kindly all the way. He allowed plenty of time for rest stops, and counted his passengers whenever he started out again. People have sometimes been left behind by surly bus drivers. One such driver can set the tone of the whole trip, making people grumble and snap at each other. There may be a chain reaction in the mood of the busload, going from the driver to the passengers.

We had one such driver from Chicago to St. Louis, but we found toward the close of the trip that he was suffering from an abscess on the base of his spine and that he could not lay off work to get it attended to, especially around holiday time. Indeed, at the stop where someone was supposed to relieve him, the other driver did not show up, and he was forced to take the bus on into St. Louis. The bus was an old rattle-trap affair that was only put on the route over the holidays. The heater did not work, and one could comfort oneself only by thinking of the stagecoach of Dickens' day. The poor driver was so ill he got out at every stop to be sick, and, though he stopped five or ten minutes, he always snarled at us all that it was not a rest stop, we were not to leave the bus. Towards the close of the evening he broke down and confessed to us all how sick he felt; then he went on with the account of his woe to two men sitting in back of him. He told them of all his troubles with his wife and his mother-in-law. They returned his confidences.

★

SOMETIMES bus passengers are not the pleasantest of companions. Once in a great while you are afflicted with someone who is a bore and, very rarely, with a real nuisance. I had one such experience in Texas riding from Amarillo to Phoenix. My sufferings became so acute that I had to get off in Albuquerque and wait for the next bus. The problem was an elderly minister (he showed me his card) who confessed that he was running away from his responsibilities. To bolster his courage, he got off at every stop and had a few drinks. I had been visiting a Negro woman in Amarillo who packed me a most elaborate lunch with some delicious roast beef sandwiches. It would have been rude, of course, to eat alone, so I had offered one of the sandwiches to my seat companion. This immediately put us on a footing of intimacy. From then on he became more and more confiding, buying me sandwiches in turn, which I could not possibly eat, what with the box of lunch I already had. Then when he told me to save them for next day, I foolishly mentioned it was Friday, whereupon I had long sermons and quotations from the Scriptures on man not being saved by meat or drink. At the next stop he bought me a fish sandwich.

As the night wore on my companion was begging me to share a drink with him, always in the most respectful, polite manner, of course. Finally my nerves became so on edge with his persistence that I had to leave the bus and wait over for another. Every seat was taken in the bus we were on, so it was impossible to change seats.

★

INCIDENTS like this, however, are rare. Usually you are in the company of workers, men and women, and they tell you of their jobs, or lack of jobs, their travels, their strivings, and sometimes of their religion.

There was another companion in Texas, a young Bohemian girl, a stenographer in Houston, who had been brought up on the land and was heartbroken to be away from it. Among the travelers there are often truck drivers whose cars have broken down, and they like to stand by the driver and talk of the hazards of the road. Just yesterday, when I was coming down from the farm at Newburgh in a blizzard, the driver of a milk truck came back into the city with me. He had taken his truck as far as Highland Mills and then had to abandon it to be picked up later. All the way down he saw other drivers wrestling with their huge vans and trailers and kept commenting on the struggle. "Mine was an empty, I couldn't do a thing. Now when I get to the city they won't believe me, how bad it is up here. The city's warm and melts the snow." You could feel that it was on his mind that he had not finished his job. He was bothered and resentful at the same time. He was old for a driver and looked worn and battered. His hands were red and chapped and dirty, and he clasped a red Manila folder—his papers, his reports, his job. You felt how much more important than he the job was, the way men have made things today.

Another driver who sat beside me on one of my cross-country trips was a driver of cars from Detroit. He had taken the bus back to get another pair of cars. He described to me how the efficiency "engineers" worked, estimating to the drop the amount of gasoline needed. One time he got behind a parade and the starting and stopping used more gasoline than the experts had estimated so he had a hard time making it to the next stop. Not much chance to pad expense accounts on such jobs. The assumption is that all men are dishonest, and estimates are made accordingly. He explained how the company connived with the driver to get out of paying the

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special tax in some states, and how they shared the gain.

★

AS I traveled across the country this time, I found the buses more crowded than they were a year ago and more people talking about lack of work. "They keep telling us there is no depression," one man grumbled, "but it looks like it's coming on again." The last depression is still in their bones.

Food differs as you go across the United States, though not much in price. In Arkansas and Oklahoma you can get karopecan pie, which is as sweet as Syrian pastry and just as regional. All through the West you should eat chile. It is the cheapest and best dish for a main meal. It isn't the pure Mexican chile, but it's hot enough, and it is the same everywhere, made with red beans and meat and lots of gravy and crackers. A few years ago it was fifteen cents; now it is a quarter. But it is still a full meal and better than anyone can get on a railroad diner.

Yes, we have eaten on diners, and we have traveled in other ways than in buses. When I was coming back from Seattle by the Northern Pacific, by railroad coach, the seating was most comfortable, with wonderful leg rests that made it possible really to sleep soundly all night. But the radio blared all day. No amount of pleading with the porter or conductor would make them turn it off. The Western Pacific with its double-decker sky-view effect was most interesting, but the seating was not so comfortable, and up in the "dome" the fumes of the diesel engine seeped in and the rounded glass was hard on the eyes.

Peter Maurin almost always traveled by buses, but on one occasion someone sent him a railroad ticket to Windsor, Ontario. When we escorted him to the Pullman up at Grand Central, he was not at all at home. The berths were made up, and he was confused by the curtains. He was undoubtedly afraid of getting lost and walking into the wrong bunk.

Peter was much more at home in buses. He was never so happy as when he was setting forth on a trip to speak, to visit our Houses of Hospitality and farms. Once when we were both speaking at Notre Dame and were leaving the next morning to go in different directions, Professors Emmanuel Chapman and Robert Pollock accompanied us to the station. They had been enthusiastically arguing with Peter all night and were still going strong that morning. In his absorption in the talk Peter started to get on the wrong bus.

"Look out, Peter, that bus is going to Cincinnati," Pollack cried. Peter answered debonairly, "Oh, that's all right, I know someone there." He was what I would call a real traveler.

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The Screen

Wild Goose Pimples

THERE'S nothing like a good melodrama every now and then to send shivers down your spine and to help you release pent-up hostilities. I don't think Alfred Hitchcock's new thriller, *"Stage Fright,"* ranks with his best, but it still has enough scary scenes to keep you on edge, and its humor is much gayer than any that has turned up in his previous murder mysteries. At times Jane Wyman seems too naive as the student (at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London) who hides her boy friend (Richard Todd) when he is suspected of murdering the husband of a famous actress. But since Marlene Dietrich carries blasé sophistication to the extreme in playing this role of the actress, no doubt Wyman's naïvete is intended for contrast. And it also contrasts effectively with the smooth correctness of the detective on the case (Michael Wilding). His annoyance at Jane when he discovers her meddling (posing as Dietrich's maid) is tempered by his new-found love for this charming though rather daffy girl. Her daffiness can be traced to her mother and father (beautifully played by Dame Sybil Thorndike and Alistair Sim) who are right out of the You-Can't-Take-It-With-You school. Since so many writers are involved in the script for "Stage Fright," I don't know who should have credit for what; the story doesn't amount to a great deal, but the dialogue is clever, and Director Hitchcock has made the most of it for his macabre purposes by sandwiching humor between chills. You will be delightfully terrified.

"Woman in Hiding" is a minor thriller that has its frightening moments until you suddenly realize the hokum is too far-fetched. Then you giggle more at the piling on of melodrama than at the picture's real scariness. Actually its cast is better than its material, and Director Michael Gordon uses his actors effectively at times. Ida Lupino portrays a frightened bride who realizes that her husband (Stephen McNally) killed her father and now hopes to dispose of her. Occasionally she is helped in the long chase by a happy-go-lucky fellow (Howard Duff) who can't quite decide whose side he's on. Fortunately for Ida he makes up his mind before the big fight at the mill. You may enjoy hissing McNally who is very villainous in the old school tradition.

Even our parents, who must have seen many a romantic melodrama about suffering though not-too-pure heroines, wouldn't have put up with *"Paid in Full."* In this deep-breathing drama Lizabeth Scott pays and pays. But her morals and mores are so mixed up, I guess she ought to; and you're foolish to waste a single tear. Lizabeth starts right in suffering when her selfish sister (Diana Lynn) steals the man (Robert Cummings) whom Liz loves. The marriage goes haywire and when Liz accidently kills their child, Diana and Robert are divorced. Then Lizabeth quickly swings into action, mar-

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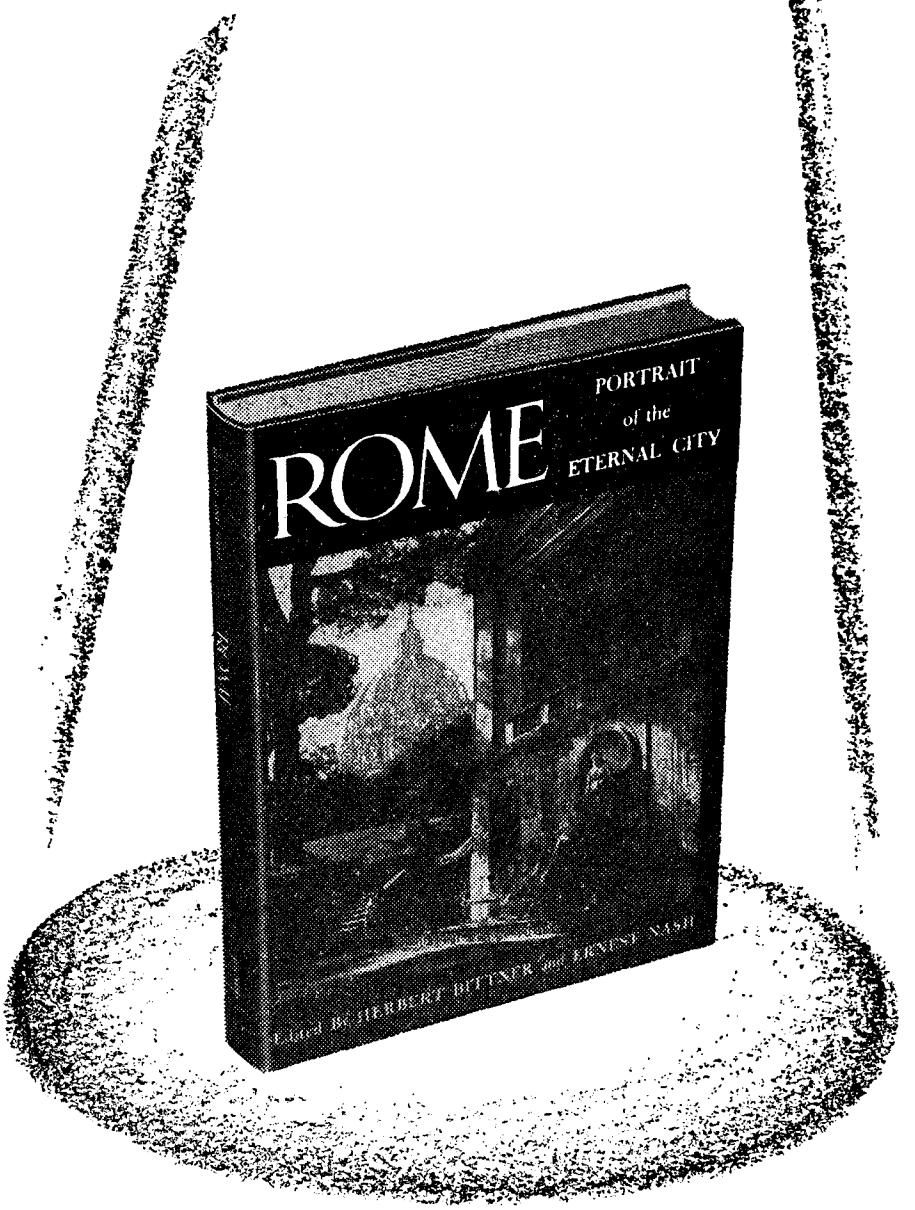

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Assistant Director, Department of Social Action,
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ries Robert, has a baby, dies. When Diana and Robert are reunited, they adopt this child; and everybody, you see, is paid in full. It is incredible that this guff has been given a flossy production by Hal Wallis under the direction of William Dieterle. But as I said, our parents wouldn't have accepted this story, not even to watch such glamorous sufferers as Elsie Ferguson or Alice Brady.

"Chain Lightning" runs into plot trouble too, especially in the romance between Humphrey Bogart and Eleanor Parker which tries too hard to be one of those Ernest Hemingway hairy-fist-holding-a-rose affairs. The main story, however, is about supersonic aviation and some of this proves rather exciting when Bogart makes his long, fast flight from Nome to Washington in a jet plane. The arguments between Raymond Massey and Richard Whorf about speed and safety get pretty talky; as a matter of fact movies about flying and fliers are inclined to be static. After all you can't get much movement out of shots of Bogart sitting in a plane. The meteor dust that whizzes past him is very pretty; but I hope "Chain Lightning" is not setting a pattern for a cycle of supersonic sagas.

Westerns are a natural for cinematic melodrama and even when the plot is loaded with clichés, as is the case with *"Montana"*, a certain excitement comes through. Perhaps you are awed by the stalwart hero's good horsemanship (exhibited by Errol Flynn in all the fast riding scenes as well as in one particular episode in which he rides a wild bronc) or by the magnificence of the scenery (further glamorized by Technicolor) or by the contrasts between the serenity of the great open spaces and the pettiness of man's behavior as he clutters up this beauty.

The story is built up around that old chestnut about war between cowboys and sheepherders. My rancher friends tell me that this problem really is very serious; cattle cannot thrive where sheep graze. But somehow when the movies handle these affairs they manage to maim or kill off more humans than animals. Before "Montana" reaches its finale, and happy compromise, Australian sheep rancher Flynn and strong-willed cattle owner Alexis Smith lead their followers into many a vicious and bloody combat. While the film's general atmosphere is convincing, its villainy and love-motivated conclusion are not. The scenery, however, will win you.

If *"Malaya"* had been shown during the war it probably would have been laughed off the screen. At that time we took the Japs seriously and we were sure that even stout fellas like Spencer Tracy and James Stewart couldn't bust in and push them over like tenpins. Now, however, in this grossly exaggerated melodrama showing how Spence and Jimmy got the rubber that won the war, we are expected to believe all kinds of incredible feats. Or maybe we aren't supposed to believe any of this. Tracy and Stewart don't take their roles seriously; and Director Richard Thorpe seems to be laughing up his sleeve most of the time. The efforts of the good cast, which includes Valentina Cortesa, Sydney Greenstreet, John Hodiak, Lionel Barrymore, are really wasted. But maybe they're not; maybe even a bad melodrama can give you goose pimples. PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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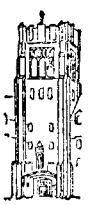

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Books

The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc. Charles Péguy. Pantheon. $3.00.

WE NEED a sense of history, if we are to see our own problems in true perspective. Because they are so close to us, our own evils tower over us so hugely as to make us think that there never was a time quite so bad in all the history of the world. To the man of forty, today, there has been nothing but war and rumors of war, from as far back as he can remember. He watches the slow and seemingly inexorable closing of the Red pincers from Europe and from Asia, and is torn between fatalism and desperation.

Well, when Joan of Arc was born, back in 1412, the French and the English had been at it for almost one hundred years. Year after year the French farmer had seen his wheat-fields despoiled and his vineyards violated. He had listened to atrocity tales about "Goddam" soldiers who fed oats to their horses off the altars, and who refreshed themselves on the consecrated Hosts.

To the little girl at her spinning wheel, it must have seemed that the world was lost indeed. It *did* seem to her that the world was lost. It was not the raped harvests nor the burned cottages that oppressed her, nor the flight of the people across the fields, their belongings on their backs, as the soldiers approached. It was not these things. It was rather the thought of a world going to Hell; the damning evil of the soldiers who killed, and the equally damning cowardice of those who acquiesced.

★

HERE Charles Péguy has given us the picture of Joan's awakening to the answer; the answer to her troubled cry, "How is it that so many good Christians don't make up a good Christendom?" The answer becomes obvious in the light of Our Lord's Passion, as Jeannette and her adviser, Madame Gervaise, view it in vision together. It is the answer that only the self-blindness of men can make to seem a hidden one. It is obvious for those who will look.

It is nothing less than the acceptance of one's own personal responsibility. To cease asking for miracles, when one has not even done the ordinary himself; to cease looking to Heaven for a saint to save us, unless one is ready to receive the mission of being that saint; to use the tools God has given—prayer and suffering—to the full limit of one's capacity, leaving the weighing and the assignment of results to the Lord.

Péguy has cast his work in dialogue form, with Jeannette herself (age 13), her little friend Hauviette, and Madame Gervaise as the speakers. I do not read French, and so I am no judge of the fidelity of translation. I can only say that *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc* reads so beautifully in English, that I am sure the

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translator, Julian Green, has done an exceptional job.

The spirit of the poet, which Péguy was, is evident in every line of this professedly prose work of his. It is the poetry of the Psalms, in which each idea seems to bend back upon itself to form a link for the next idea which is to follow. It is the poetry of music, in which a thematic refrain blends and unifies the whole. No one talks to others like Jeannette and Hauviette and Gervaise talk. But it is the way we talk to ourselves, the way we think, when we think. Turning each part of an idea over carefully, looking at it twice or thrice, taking our stance firmly upon it before putting our foot forward for the next step.

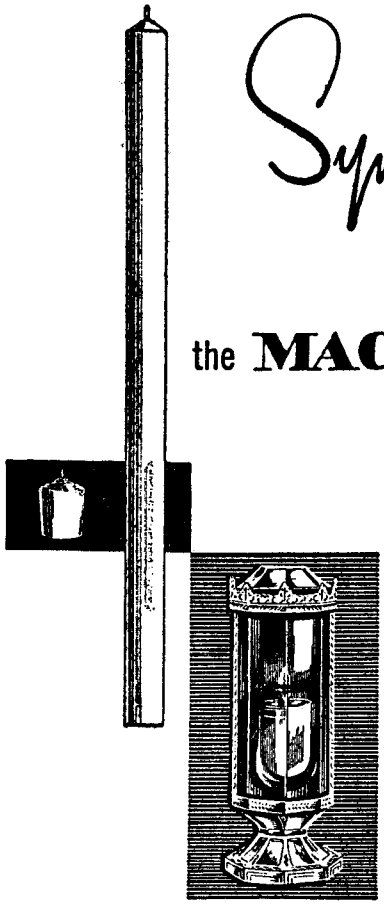
It makes for a style that is the very perfection of simplicity. It is a style from which the most profound thoughts emerge with a clarity that makes them seem deceptively elementary. It seems a pity that the man who created this style is dead. An even greater pity that it should have taken forty years to bring *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc* to an English-reading public.

Not that the work has lost any of its value by reason of its age. Truth, Beauty, Goodness; these things are eternal, and they are the stuff of which all true art is fashioned. Péguy's book could not have been any more contemporaneous had it been written this very week. There is strength in it, and a holy uneasiness too, as we read it today beneath our own lowering skies; and there will be courage in it, and direction, for the man who may read it a hundred years from now. Human nature doesn't change, except transiently under grace accepted. Human passions don't change—pride is as ageless as the Devil. Nor will courage ever wholly die, since love is as eternal as God.

★

THE capacity to suffer, to be trod upon and rise again, is something no bomb, however horrendous, can destroy. It will be, so long as men are. Listen to Hauviette: "For well nigh fifty years and more, according to the old folks, the soldier has been harvesting as he chooses; for well nigh fifty years and more, the soldier has been crushing, or burning, or robbing the ripe harvest as he chooses; the least he does is to tread the ripe harvest under his horse's hoofs. Now then, after all that time, each year, in the fall, the good ploughman, your father, my father, your two big brothers, our friends' fathers, always the same, the same peasants, the same French peasants, plough the same fields with just the same care, before God, the fields yonder, when they sow their seed. . . . Every year in the same season they do the same job with the same courage, the whole year long the same work with the same patience: that is what holds everything together, what keeps everything; they are the ones who hold everything together, who keep everything, who save all that can be saved; it is thanks to them that all is not yet dead, and the good Lord will surely end by blessing their crops."

In a passage like that, it is hard to tell where the greater merit lies: in the grandeur of style which builds so chastely with one- and two-syllable words; or in the



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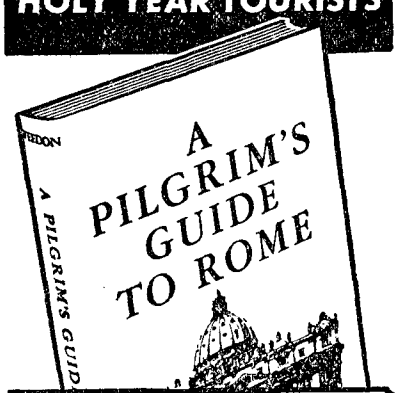

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strength that comes to me at the thought that I am one with such men as these. *The Mystery of the Charity of Joan of Arc* is full of such passages, it is full of such thoughts. It is a book for today. LEO J. TRESE.

The Tears of the Blind Lions. Thomas Merton. New Directions. $1.25.

POETRY IS to prose as liqueur to wine: cognac is made of the same grapes as burgundy, but by how other a process! Father Merton takes his lovely title from Leon Bloy: "when those who love God try to talk about Him, their words are blind lions looking for springs in the desert".

He is at his best when most daring, most trusting: his "Hymn for the Feast of Duns Scotus" breaks into a trot, then into a canter, and then into a great galloping.

> For the sound of my Beloved
> The voice of the sound of my Three Beloved
> Comes down out of the heavenly depths
> And hits my heart like thunder
> And lo, I am alive and dead
> With heart held fast in that Three-Personed Love.

Here are few poems, just seventeen, but in each of them, as in the last, Father Merton hears

> a Sovereign talking in my arteries
> Reversing, with His Promises, all things
> that now go on with fire and thunder.

ANNE FREMANTLE.

Travel Books

Rocky Mountain Country. American Folkways. Albert N. Williams. Duell. $3.50.

THE effort to keep the individual volumes of a series individual is a difficult job when the set runs to twenty volumes, which Duell, Sloan & Pearce's "American Folkways" now, with this publication, numbers. Mr. Williams does well, up to a point. That is, after he gets briefly by the Spaniards, who don't interest him, most of the sections have decided anecdotal worth, and, altogether, reasonable historical value.

But bringing in dozens of topics and characters, in order to cover the country conscientiously, the author can't be expected to instil a contagiously warm interest into everything. The little-known story of the Civil War in the Rockies, as an event, and the mixed-fortuned Horace Tabor, as a character, pan out among the richest. But some of the sections are a sort of polite acknowledgment. The summary chapter, about now and the future, is stimulating but not satisfying.

Travelers increasingly sense the abrupt alteration in

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the human and cultural atmospheres, too, when the clear airs of the Rockies are reached. Mr. Williams notes it and likes it, but his description of it and the causes he records do not account for it. Perhaps he limits the range a bit arbitrarily: from Cheyenne to Santa Fe on the map, and in the text he largely limits himself to popular picture-type, regional recollection. PHILIP BURNHAM.

Touring Italy in 1950. *A Holy Year Guide. André De Salza. Cocce Press.* $1.75.

AMONG THE spate of travel books about Italy which have been brought out in connection with the Holy Year, this is one of the best we have read so far. André De Salza knows his Italy—through direct experience and a long stay there; he knows how to guide the foreign visitor through the natural and artistic beauties of that sunny land. He knows the Italians and likes them; and while warning that, on occasion, they may take advantage of the unwary visitor, he makes clear that cheating and milking the foreign tourist is definitely not a national sport with them, as some American writers have been known to pretend.

The longest section of the book is devoted to Rome, as well it may be, particularly in this Holy Year (there is a special chapter, by the way, in which the origin and significance of the Jubilee are explained and the main ceremonies listed and illustrated). It contains carefully planned "itineraries" designed to give the visitor, within the limits of a three-days stay, at least a glimpse of the major attractions of the Eternal City. A very practical feature is represented by the short notes (in Italian in the text) to be shown to the cab drivers to let them know where the tourist wants to be taken, where he wants to stop on the way, etc.

All through the book, the reader will find not only accurate descriptions of places of artistic, religious and historic interest, but a number of those practical tips and hints about the people and their habits, about food and lodging and traveling, which are a real blessing for the tourist visiting a foreign land for the first time.

LEO J. WOLLEMBORG.

A Pilgrim's Guide to Rome. Harry Weeden. Prentice Hall. $2.75.
Italy, Guide Bleu. Italian Touring Club. Crown. $5.00.
Rome. L. Curtius. Pantheon. $1.95.
Rome Today. Agnes Rothery. Dodd, Mead. $3.00.

THE famous medieval pilgrims' hymn beginning: "O noble Rome, ruler of the world, city without a peer, reddened with the crimson blood of martyrs, resplendent with the spotless purity of virgins. Till time is no more, never shall we cease to greet and bless thee. Hail forever," is quoted in full at the conclusion of Mr. Weedon's volume, "the only comprehensive, all-inclusive guide book, especially prepared for the Holy Year of 1950."

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It is more specifically a guide for Catholic pilgrims, though equally informative for tourists taking advantage of special Holy Year rates. It is to be commended for its large type and its thoughtful assumption that pilgrims and tourists alike have a vast number of needs. It includes menus, lists of places to apply for tickets, and recommends the institution "Alburge Diurno," brush-up quarters, where baths, hair cuts, shoe shines, luggage checking, clothes pressing and telephoning can be managed.

The Italian Touring Club's book (printed in Italy) falls into the old Baedecker class, with numerous maps of regions and cities, and fine type. It is a good buy for those who mean to stay a long time in an ancient and lovely land.

The handy *Rome* by the scholar Curtius is a selective guide with a command of the flow of Roman, Renaissance and Italian history. It is a pocket size volume, well written, and is strictly historical.

Agnes Rothery's *Rome Today* is the 33rd book from an experienced tourist and researcher. Her theme is that "Amid the ruins and monuments of her past (Rome) is a modern city as she has always been a modern city in every period of her existence. New ambitions, new dreams, new achievements animate her and touch to new life all who seek her out." There is something both touching and humorous in her chapter on graves and tombs and in her noticing the return journeys of hearse drivers, who with black hats a-cock on their heads, are as often as not singing "O Sole Mio." The author is writing about Latin civilization with Latin ease.

ERNESTINE EVANS.

I Return to Ireland. S. P. B. Mais. British Book Center. $3.50.

THIS DIARY of an Irish journey is dedicated "to Imogen Lalage and Jill" who, being daughters and wife of our author, bore his "vagaries with infinite patience" as the four of them disported their knowledge, and pursued their tourism with a critical gusto. There are moments when the author presents himself, unwittingly perhaps, as a caricature of a British "gent. and family" being very superior abroad. If the Irish themselves can forgive the alternating currents of disparagement and touting, readers can make use of this book, for it is written in dialogue style, contains a great many interviews (to which readers can make their own footnotes) with such personages as Lord Dunsany. It is packed with details of prices, and commentary on transport. It is very, very British, critical of the cooking (Irish cooking *is* bad) pious about British austerity and quite unaware that British tourist gobbling does run up the prices of Irish food to the Irish poor.

Here is a book with a difference, centered on County Wicklow, with chapters on Connemara and Kerry and excellent pictures and maps. E.E.

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Open for the Season. Karl P. Abbott. Doubleday. $3.00.

NEXT TO something new, they say, nothing is so fresh as something old; and memoirs, travels in time, give a perspective and a gilding to all sorts of things. Karl Abbott grew up as the son of the man who kept "The Uplands" in Bethlehem, New Hampshire, and has been in the business of mine-hosting all over the country, north and south, serving the rich and the not so rich. His memory goes back to the days where three meals (and good meals, no canned goods at all) and rooms with views of mountains cost $2.50 a day, down to times when a lot of the traffic is able to bear ten times that sum for what is not the least bit better. Thousands of people will find themselves and their counterparts in this book, in the melee of changing manners.

Mr. Abbott is by way of being both philosopher and raconteur, and if you want the gift given to you of seeing yourself as he saw both you and other folks, this is your dish. If you are serious, there is abundance told about race relations, city folks and country folks, big business and little business, tipping, wages, quarantines, suites and rooms (with and without bath) at all sorts of inns, banquets, conventions, and all that. This is a downright entertaining, very well-written, juicy book and you won't need any Mrs. Post to make you a mannerly hotel guest if you read this book about the tourist business and how American folks behave en route. E.E.

Washington Past and Present. Chalmers Roberts. Public Affairs Press. $4.50.

AMERICANS being prime bombers of their own past, this picture book of Washington has uses for travelers and, as well, citizens who will never trek to the Potomac. Mr. Roberts' scrap book of old cartoons, prints and photographs, brings together in graphic narrative 1790-1950, from conception in the minds of the founding fathers to the merry-go-round of a modern world capital. The story line of the narrative is chaotic, the pictures have not been selected with any eye for the aesthetic, and the reproduction is only fair. But the old buildings are pictured, and the passage of time and the tumultuous growth, the visages of statesmen and of the District of Columbia's people now and in the past, hold the attention, critical and uncritical. As in most scrap books, it is hard to find any order in the disorder. E.E.

Guide to America. Elmer Jenkins. Public Affairs Press. $3.75.

THE Travel Director of the AAA has provided a 1949-1950 edition of a state by state and town by town information bin for the millions who mean to see America first. Arranged in alphabetical order it serves all manner of the men, women, and children intent on camping, fishing, historical shrines, rodeos and regattas.

E.E.

WHEN WE TOLD YOU

about the **Knox** translation of the whole Bible being complete a couple of weeks ago, we forgot to say that **Volume II** of **THE OLD TESTAMENT** (the one that makes it complete) would be published on March 8th. Sorry if you went into a bookstore looking for it and it wasn't there—it will be now ($5). So will **Father Leo Trese's VESSEL OF CLAY** ($2), his account of a day in his life as a parish priest—an enchanting book if ever we read one—subtle medicine for incipient anti-clericalism, pure joy for anyone not so afflicted.

Dom Hubert Van Zeller has a new book out, **WE LIVE WITH OUR EYES OPEN** ($2), not to be confused with **WE DIE STANDING UP** (also $2), published last Spring. (You may think nobody could confuse those two titles, but you'd be wrong—We Die With Our Eyes Open and We Live Standing Up have both been tried.) The earlier book was mostly about obstacles to the spiritual life, this second one is mostly about means, prayer, education, mysticism and so on. The author has not forgotten that he "can't bear stuffy spiritual reading."

We all know it is true that knowledge of the existence of God can be arrived at by human reason, but showing the non-Catholic next door how this is done is something else again. *He* doesn't know it, and is likely to be strangely interested that we should even make such a claim on behalf of human minds. In **ESSENTIALS OF THEISM** ($2.25) **Father Hawkins** shows how it is done. In spite of his book's rather alarming title, you need ordinary intelligence to read it, no more.

Professor Halecki has also written a book with a formidable title: **THE LIMITS AND DIVISIONS OF EUROPEAN HISTORY** ($2.50). He asks first, just when does European history begin and what does it include—is American history, for instance, really a part of it? Secondly, how far do such arbitrary divisions of history as Dark Ages, Middle Ages, etc., help, and how far do they hinder us from realizing the essential continuity of history? If you don't give a hoot about any of those things, plainly you don't want the book, but anyone who knows enough to be interested in how we got the way we are, will find it quite fascinating.

Did you ever read **THE IMITATION OF CHRIST?** Well, have another try. **Edgar Daplyn** has put it into modern English ($2) which is a great help—in fact, it gives you the same sort of pleasant shock as **Mr. Sheed's** translation of **THE CONFESSIONS OF ST. AUGUSTINE** ($3). The book really seems to have been written for us, not for our grandfathers.

We hate to keep on about it, but have you seen the Spring **Trumpet?** It's really rather a good one. **Lucy MacGill** will send it to you if you just let her know you would like it. Free, of course.

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REV. LEO J. TRESE is the Director of Rural Life for the Archdiocese of Detroit. He is the author of *Vessels of Clay,* published by Sheed and Ward.

LEO J. WOLLEMBORG recently returned from a stay of several months in his native Italy. He has been a lecturer on international relations at Columbia University.

ERNESTINE EVANS reviews books for the New York *Herald Tribune.* She spent the fall and early winter of this year in Great Britain.

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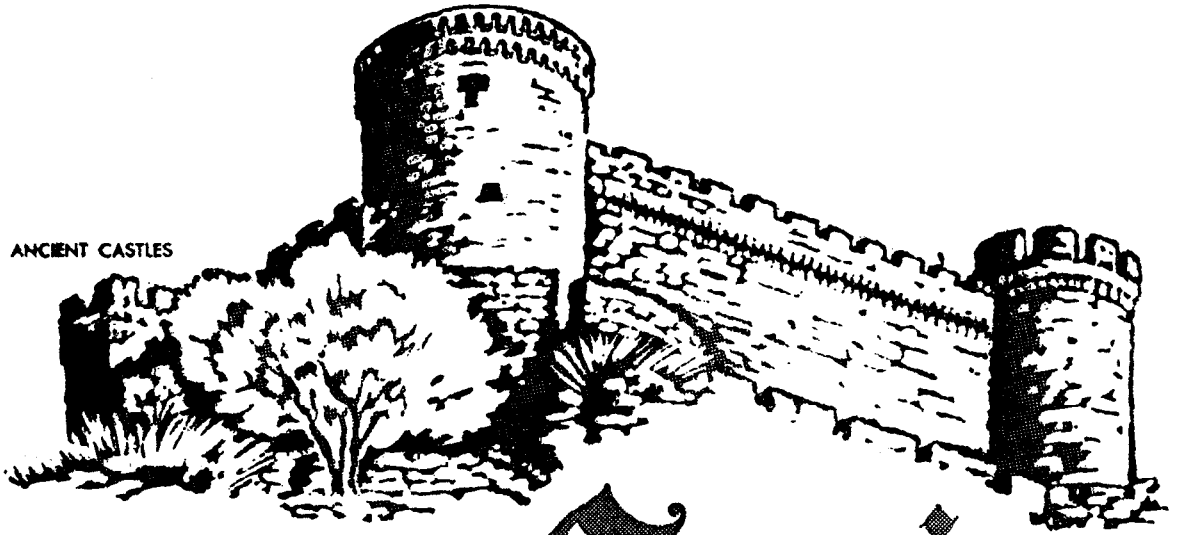

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